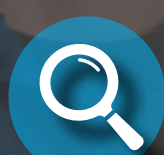


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CITIZEN AIRMAN

October 2017



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Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

From the Top

 @ARFCCommander

‘No Bird Soars in a Calm’

What Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved on a cold winter day in the Outer Banks of North Carolina more than 100 years ago would change history forever: The age of flight had begun.

The first telegram back to Ohio to inform their parents of their great accomplishment read, “Success ... Four flights Thursday morning ... All against 21-mile wind ... Started from ground level with engine power alone ... Average speed through air 31 miles ... Longest 57 seconds ... Inform press ... Home for Christmas.”

The book “The Wright Brothers” by David McCullough tells the dramatic story of two courageous brothers who taught the world to fly. Page after page, the book describes the unyielding determination of two brothers who shared a dream.

Their father described them as “inseparable as twins” and “indispensable to each other.”

In 1899, in a room above their bicycle shop, they built their first aircraft – a flying kite made of split bamboo and paper with a wingspan of 5 feet.

Four years later, their flights at Kitty Hawk were one of the turning points in history. No one present that day could have imagined the impact those first-ever piloted flights would have on the world.

Competitors at that time would spend \$70,000 of mostly public money to try to get a machine in the air, whereas the brothers would spend less than \$1,000, paid from their meager bicycle shop profits.

A man who helped them in Kitty Hawk, John T. Daniels, said later that day, “It wasn’t luck that made them fly; it was hard work and common sense. They put their whole heart and soul and all their energy into an idea, and they had faith.”

The innovations across the years of flight have enabled the movement of people and goods, the advancement in seeing and understanding our earth and the visibility on the movements of a single individual on any given day, at any given moment, on any point on the globe.

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of our amazing Air Force. In 2018, we will celebrate the Air Force Reserve’s 70th anniversary.

It is mind-numbing to think of how quickly we have advanced in flight since that cold December morning in 1903 at Kitty Hawk. What should keep us spellbound is the promise of advancement in air and space flight envisioned over the next 70 years.

As the Air Force Reserve approaches its 70th birthday, I want to thank our amazing Airmen and civilians who contribute to tomorrow’s advancement in technology and capabilities, making us more agile, lethal and forward-thinking.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein said, “Innovation is powerful when ideas from every level can make their way to decision-makers.”

Our opportunity to seize the moment is always at hand.



Each of us must explore innovative methods to make our marks on the future Air Force.

You amaze me every day with your stories of perseverance, resilience and determination, and I am honored and humbled to serve with you.



MARYANNE MILLER
Lieutenant General
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Citizen Airman // October 2017

Leadership Staff

Gen. David L. Goldfein

Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller *Commander, Air Force Reserve Command*

Col. Bruce M. Bender

Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command

Magazine Staff

Cliff Tyler

Editor, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command

Bo Joyner

Managing Editor, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command

Tyler Grimes

Staff Writer, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command

Adam Butterick

Graphic Designer, Multimedia, Air Force Reserve Command

Contributing Writers

Maj. Jessica D'Ambrosio // Outstanding Airman

Master Sgt. Beth Anschutz // ISR Mission

Master Sgt. Chance Babin // Cyber Warriors, Recruiting Recruiters

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Chief's View

 @AFRC.CCC

‘Fail early, fail often, but always fail forward’ — John C. Maxwell

The journey for John Maxwell began more than 50 years ago in a small Ohio town where he learned that leadership started with development within himself and connecting with others. Since then Maxwell has become a renowned author, coach and speaker, influencing people around the world by teaching ways to embrace failure rather than allowing failure to cripple us.

As leaders, we must strive to create a culture free of the fear of failure in order to provide our Airmen an environment that promotes innovation and calculated risk taking. In the book “Failing Forward,” Maxwell shares that leadership should not steer clear of failures but rather should take ownership of failures and learn from them. The Wright brothers had many failed attempts to get their plane off the ground before they finally found success.

In today’s environment of constrained budgets and manpower reductions, it is important to foster a culture willing to take calculated risks. Since the invention of the airplane, there have been many legacies showcasing the rich history of our innovative Airmen.

Working with a 100-pound slab of aluminum, Master Sgt. John Vescovi and Tech. Sgt. Richard Towlson, along with Gary Surozenski, metal technicians out of the 439th Airlift Wing at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, locally fabricated a C-5 elevator support bracket. After completing all the necessary tests and approval process, a part that was not available within the system, and would cost approximately \$50,000 through an outside vendor, was produced for only \$1,500 and kept the plane from being grounded until the part was available.

This is just one of the many stories of Reserve Citizen Airmen taking the risk to be innovative and paving the way for others to follow. Others like you.

Taking care of our Airmen, their development and their quality of life are all important to me and are essential factors into how we will look into the future. As an Air Force, we are constantly changing, but how we take care of one another and the innovation that has come from our Airmen does not.

Although not all ideas make it into production, the need for your ideas will continue and is critical to the shaping of our future force. I challenge you to pursue those ideas, stand ready and be willing to fail forward. Our Air Force Reserve depends on you.



Ericka Kelly
Chief Master Sergeant
Command Chief Master Sergeant
Air Force Reserve Command

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The Official Magazine of the Air Force Reserve

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Schoolhouse trains Reservists who take the challenge



Cover: Reserve Citizen Airman Lt. Col. Robert "Farmer" Hines Jr., 84th Test and Evaluation Squadron test pilot at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, is one of only 12 applicants selected for NASA's 2017 astronaut candidate class. In total, more than 18,300 people submitted applications for the 2017 class, an all-time record for NASA's program. See story on page 10. (Photo courtesy of NASA/Robert Markowitz)

Air Force Reserve Maj. Lucas Caulder, a pilot with the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, pilots a WC-130J Super Hercules through clouds illuminated by lightning during a low-level pass through Hurricane Irma Sept. 8. The Hurricane Hunters of the 53rd fly the WC-130J through the eye of active hurricanes to collect weather data to provide to the National Hurricane Center. This hurricane season has been an extremely busy one for the Hurricane Hunters and a host of Reserve units that have provided rescue and relief support for areas of the country devastated by a number of hurricanes and tropical storms. (Staff Kyle Brasier)



Rescue Airman Amputee Wins Battle to Continue Serving

After a 2-½ year battle, a health care management technician with the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, who suffered a partial amputation of his left leg, finally won a battle to continue serving as a member of the Air Force Reserve.

For Senior Airman Kevin Greene, separation from the service he loved was never an option, despite the fact that he was facing the greatest challenge of his life as a result of a motorcycle accident.

“I remember the night of the accident vividly,” he said. “I was coming home from work and was stopped at a red light when I looked to my right and saw a lady in the vehicle next to me point to her window.”

Greene said as he looked to see what the woman was pointing at, he was hit.

“Next thing I know, I’m waking up in the hospital,” he recalled. “I hear people in the background crying hysterically, family praying and then the doctor walks in. He said I got into a pretty severe motorcycle accident. He said my brain was fine; there was no spinal damage. However, my left foot was just too severely broken to save, and they had to amputate it.”

Greene ended up going through several more surgeries, after his initial amputation on Dec. 17, 2014, as his leg became infected multiple times. His last surgery in February 2015 left him with three-quarters of his left leg.

During his roughly two-month stay at the hospital, Greene recalled always being surrounded by family, friends and co-workers.

“I definitely felt loved in the hospital,” said the Brooklyn, New York, native. “My immediate family was always there, of course, but my Air Force Reserve family surprised me. I knew people in the unit cared, but there was no mistaking it on the drill weekends when I’d have like 40 people coming to visit me. The staff didn’t even know what to do with that many visitors. The love and camaraderie I felt within my unit was the driving factor in my wanting to continue to serve.”

Unfortunately, Greene found out the hard way that donning the Air Force uniform again wouldn’t be an easy feat. During his first year of recovery, he had a lot of work ahead of him to get back into top physical shape.

“I went into the hospital at 182 pounds and I left at 120 pounds,” he said. “I was in my wheelchair a lot those first few months, and I wasn’t eating.”

After getting fitted with his first prosthetic in March 2015, he decided the road to recovery was best walked.

“It was a tough first few months out of the hospital,” Greene said. “I knew I needed a change of scenery to really test out my leg, so a good friend of mine took me on a road trip to my hometown, Brooklyn. We just walked the streets of New York for a week straight. It was exactly what I needed.”

After a year in recovery, Greene’s unit submitted his first participation waiver to Air Force Reserve Command to be able to participate in drill weekends. It was denied. Subsequent requests to continue his military service were also denied. But he didn’t give up.

“It was discouraging at times; I’m not gonna lie,” he said. “But I knew I was meant to be a Reservist. There are opportunities to be had in the Air Force that you just can’t get anywhere else. I was thriving in the Reserve before my accident, and I just wanted that sense of purpose and pride that comes with the uniform back again.”

Losing steam in his more than two-year battle, but never giving up, Greene faced his final steppingstone back to military service in April when he traveled to Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, to face a medical evaluation board. In addition to talking with board members, he had to pass the Air Force physical fitness test.

“I was pretty confident going into the test,” he said. “I was ready to prove myself once and for all.”

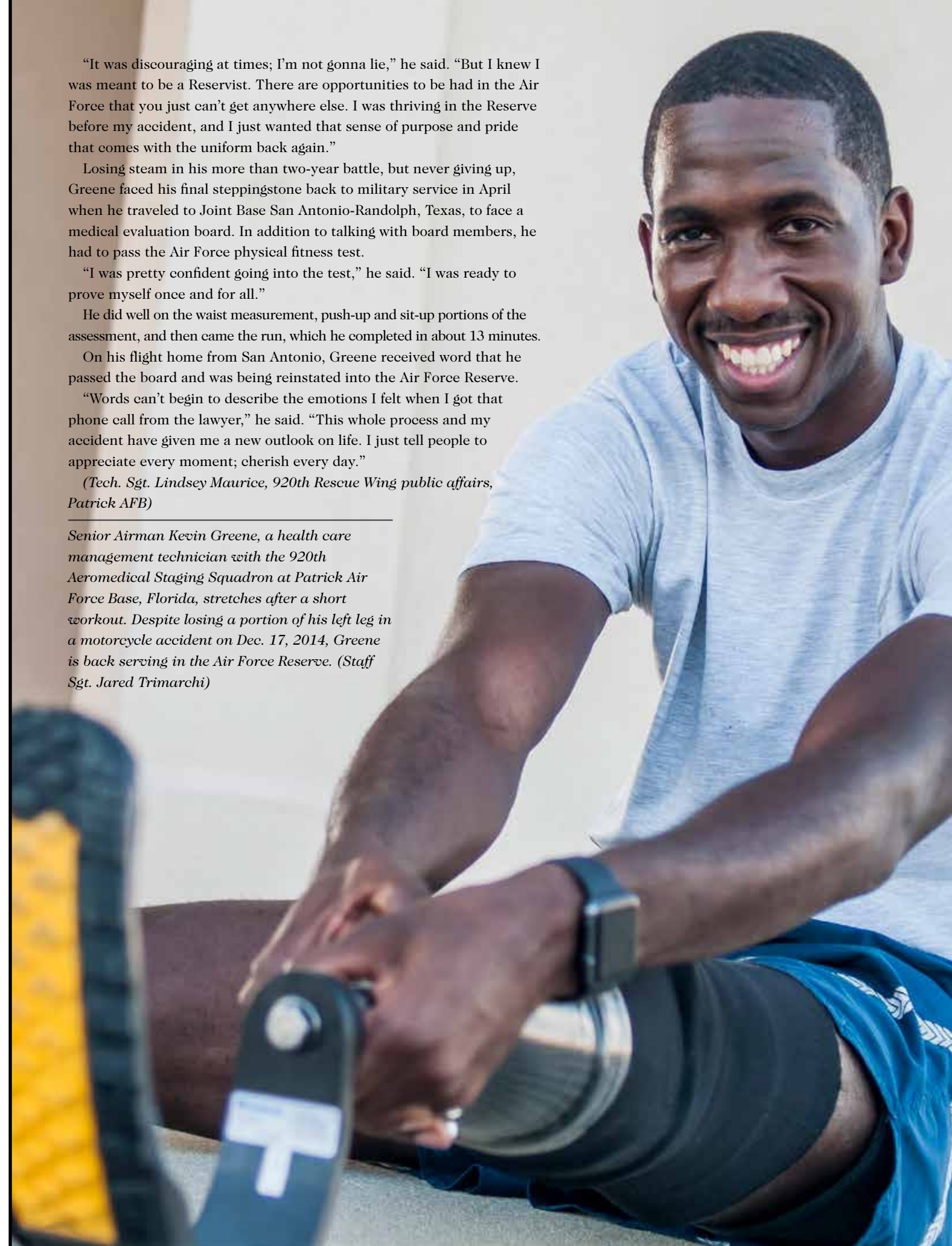
He did well on the waist measurement, push-up and sit-up portions of the assessment, and then came the run, which he completed in about 13 minutes.

On his flight home from San Antonio, Greene received word that he passed the board and was being reinstated into the Air Force Reserve.

“Words can’t begin to describe the emotions I felt when I got that phone call from the lawyer,” he said. “This whole process and my accident have given me a new outlook on life. I just tell people to appreciate every moment; cherish every day.”

(Tech. Sgt. Lindsey Maurice, 920th Rescue Wing public affairs, Patrick AFB)

Senior Airman Kevin Greene, a health care management technician with the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, stretches after a short workout. Despite losing a portion of his left leg in a motorcycle accident on Dec. 17, 2014, Greene is back serving in the Air Force Reserve. (Staff Sgt. Jared Trimarchi)





Tech. Sgt. Robert Wegeman, 919th Special Operations Wing, said goodbye to his beloved Air Force Aug. 14 after 41 years of service. The 60-year-old Airman maintained 16 different aircraft and earned more than 60 medals during his four-decade tenure. (Tech. Sgt. Sam King)

Reserve Citizen Airman Bids Farewell After 41 years

When 19-year-old Robert Wegeman Jr. left Louisiana and joined the Air Force in 1976, “Star Wars” didn’t exist, Rocky had yet to fight Apollo, gas was 60 cents per gallon, the A-10 Thunderbolt II was less than 6 months old, the F-15 Eagle was less than 2 years old and the primary military fighter aircraft was the F-4 Phantom.

After 41 years of service, in which he helped maintain 16 different Air Force aircraft, Wegeman, a technical sergeant assigned to the 919th Special Operations Maintenance Group at Duke Field, Florida, said goodbye to the Air Force Aug. 14, on his 60th birthday.

“I wanted to defend the country, and that’s exactly what I’ve done,” said Wegeman in explaining why he followed his father into the Air Force. “I’ve truly enjoyed protecting the airspace of this country.”

During his storied four-decade career, Wegeman traveled to many different bases under five major commands, deployed more than 10 times all over the world and had six different Air Force specialty codes: four in aircraft maintenance and two in aircraft weapons systems.

During his career, Wegeman maintained T-33s, EB-57s, F-15s, A-10s, F-4s, MC-130Es, C-145s and C-146s, but his favorite aircraft was his first one – the F-106 Delta Dart.

“The F-106 was ahead of its time,” said Wegeman, who maintained the aircraft from 1976 to 1982 at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. “Performance wise, I felt it was comparable to the (F-15) Eagle. It kept us busy back then. We were accomplishing 20-plus sorties on a daily basis.”

Wegeman said the highlight of his career came in 1991, when an F-106 he’d been a crew chief on was chosen for permanent display at Tyndall AFB, Florida. It meant so much to him that on his final Friday in the Air Force, he donned his dress blues and visited his old friend one last time.

He planted a goodbye kiss on the side of the aircraft display, just as he did as a crew chief before each flying sortie.

From his beloved F-106s, Wegeman moved to A-10s, then F-4Es and F-15s during his 10 years on active duty. In 1986, he returned home and transitioned to the Louisiana Air National Guard. He spent 11 years maintaining F-15s with the 159th Fighter Group before becoming an air reserve technician in 1997.

After serving nine years as a weapons loader on the A-10, the base realignment and closure process forced him to transition to another unit and aircraft. This time, he joined the 919th Special Operations Wing, where he transitioned from fighters to propeller aircraft in 2006.

Wegeman said the camaraderie and drive of the Airmen he’s worked with have remained the same throughout the decades.

“There has always been a strong commitment to achieving air supremacy,” said Wegeman, who, when he retired, sported 61 medals and devices on his ribbon rack.

The technical sergeant said he served for as long as he did simply for the joy he gained from working on aircraft.

When asked what his plans are for the future back home in Baton Rouge, he simply said he is going to “take it easy.”

(Tech. Sgt. Sam King, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs, Robins AFB, Georgia)



Senior Master Sgt. Eric Hady, 328th Air Refueling Squadron, prepares for the final departure of the last remaining C-130 Hercules from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, New York, July 26. (Tech. Sgt. Steph Sawyer)

Last C-130 Hercules Leaves Niagara Falls

The 914th Air Refueling Wing at Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, New York, said goodbye to its last C-130 Hercules July 26. Fire trucks shot arches of water on both sides of the aircraft as it was departing, a symbolic gesture of farewell to a 47-year mission.

The event marked the final stage in the process of transitioning from an airlift wing to an ARW for the 914th.

“It’s sad to see it go,” said Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Lis, a crew chief for 13 years with the 914th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, “It’s the only airframe I’ve ever worked, but we’re opening a new chapter with the tanker.”

“Now that the C-130 is actually leaving, it’s really hitting home,” said Col. Brian Bowman, 914th ARW commander. “But the future looks to be absolutely outstanding and getting better.”

The departure of the aircraft enables members of the 914th to focus on the new mission: flying and maintaining the KC-135 Stratotanker.

A total of eight C-130s left Niagara Falls. All of the aircraft will remain within Air Force Reserve Command. Seven are assigned to the 908th AW at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The eighth aircraft is now part of the 910th AW at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio.

In honor of the 47-year airlift mission, a static Hercules aircraft display will be added to the base’s airpark. A 1980 model C-130 from the 103rd Airlift Wing at Bradley Air National Guard Base, Connecticut, was scheduled to arrive in late September and will be put in place next spring.

(Tech. Sgt. Steph Sawyer, 914th ARW public affairs)

Air Force Introduces New, Improved Tool to Manage Civilian Benefits

The Air Force is the first agency in the Department of Defense to roll out a new tool that helps government civilians more effectively manage their benefits and entitlement information.

The Government Retirement and Benefits Platform is a web-based application that allows employees to make changes and updates to their health insurance, life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan and other personal benefit information.

The GRB Platform replaces the Employee Benefits Information System, which replaced most paper-based processes in 1996.

“The GRB Platform includes all the functionality previously offered with EBIS but in a much more intuitive and user-friendly environment,” said Annette Castro, a human resource specialist at the Air Force Personnel Center, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. “It gives employees the ability to easily obtain and request various retirement estimates, complete their retirement packages and review their current benefits coverage.”

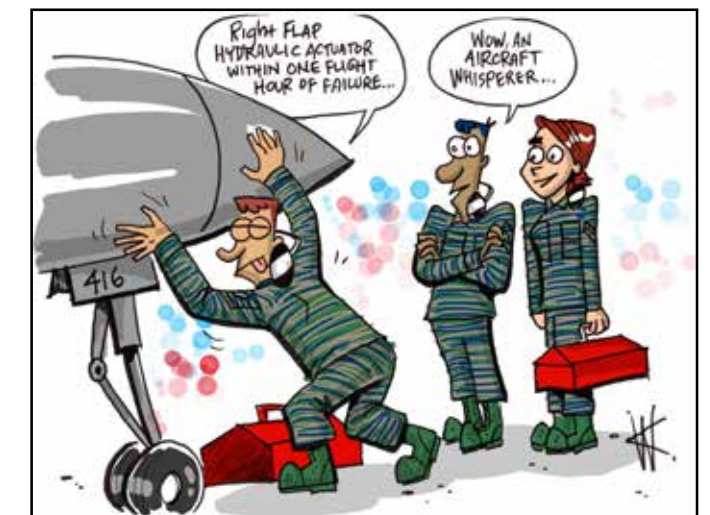
In addition, the site contains informational videos, fact sheets, electronic forms, calculators, retirement courses and links to external websites to help individuals make important decisions regarding their benefits.

Employees can access the GRB Platform application through AFPC Secure by selecting the “GRB Platform” application link. Employees should see a brief video explaining the new system the first time they log in.

“This is another example of how we are providing smarter and more efficient personnel services to our customers worldwide,” Castro said. “It’s important that we continue to improve and enhance all of our business processes, so our customers can have what they need right at their fingertips.”

(Richard Salomon, AFPC public affairs)

POPE'S PUNS



The Enlisted Force Structure Review

Command initiative focused on finding most effective, efficient mix of NCOs

By Bo Joyner

Officials from across Air Force Reserve Command are working hard on a new effort to make sure the command's enlisted force structure is designed to meet the needs of AFRC and the Air Force, both now and in the future.

In January 2016, now-retired Lt. Gen. James Jackson, AFRC commander at the time, directed a continuous process improvement event to examine the enlisted force structure and determine if it was meeting organizational needs.

"This was the first time in nearly 20 years that AFRC conducted a corporate-level review of how decisions were made in the process of structuring the enlisted force," said Brett Clark, a policy analyst at Headquarters AFRC who is working on the new enlisted force structure project.

During this corporate-level review, officials discovered that, over time, a great disparity had developed between the unit type code-driven, requirements-based grades distribution of all enlisted positions and the authorization-based grades distribution of all enlisted funded positions. AFRC hires enlisted members based on the number of authorized positions.

"Comparing these two distributions, we learned that in every rank category except staff sergeants and below, there were more stripes distributed to authorized positions than the Air Force actually required to complete the mission," said Lt. Col. Dave Ubelhor, another policy analyst assigned to the enlisted force structure project. "The question then became, 'How can AFRC improve the distribution process of authorized rank/grade positions and more strategically structure and manage its indispensable enlisted force?'"

"We needed a flexible and transparent process that would preserve, build and shape the Air Force Reserve, maximize force development, and provide career progression and leadership opportunities commensurate with various levels of responsibility for each enlisted rank and grade," said Jeffrey Pennington, AFRC director of staff. "We also needed a standard, well-understood and consistent method to process requested exceptions to policy (requests to distribute positions differently within an Air Force specialty or directorate)."

After the corporate-level review, AFRC decided to implement a fundamentally new approach to structure the

enlisted force — one that focuses on how to better distribute the funded enlisted positions across the command by rank/grade and within each career field.

At the heart of this new approach is a new Enlisted Grades Council, which requires AFRC enlisted leaders to be actively and intricately involved in how decisions are made for the people they represent.

"For the first time in AFRC's history, the chief enlisted managers are empowered to strategically and deliberately structure, distribute and manage the enlisted force across the various rank and grade categories," said Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly, AFRC's command chief master sergeant and the chair of the Enlisted Grades Council.

Under the new enlisted force structure construct, chief enlisted managers will collaborate with multiple subject-matter experts — career field managers, major command functional managers, functional area managers and numbered Air Force command chiefs — to examine the requirements-based grades distribution for each Air Force specialty. They then propose an authorization-based grades distribution for all the positions in that career field. They will repeat this process for every Air Force specialty within their directorate's portfolio.

The proposed distributions for each Air Force specialty are reviewed and finalized by the Enlisted Grades Council and submitted to the AFRC commander and other senior leaders for approval.

Plans call for the new Enlisted Grades Council to convene approximately every two years to review the command's enlisted grades structure and recommend redistribution if necessary. The council's first meeting is set for 2018. Details of how the council will be implemented are still being finalized.

"I'm excited about the work our enlisted force structure working group has generated over the last year and a half, and I'm looking forward to seeing the work our new Enlisted Grades Council will produce to make sure we have the right mix of enlisted forces in place to meet our requirements in the years to come," said Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, AFRC commander.



Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly, right, Air Force Reserve Command's command chief master sergeant, leads the discussion at a recent Enlisted Force Structure Review meeting. (Master Sgt. Stephen Schester)

ASTRONAUT IN TRAINING

*One small step for man, one giant
leap for Reserve Citizen Airman*
By Tyler Grimes



Lt. Col. Robert Hines, who flies the F-15E Strike Eagle as a Reservist with the 84th Test and Evaluation Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, was recently accepted into NASA's astronaut training program. (Illustration by Adam Butterick)

Ever since he can remember, Lt. Col. Robert “Farmer” Hines Jr., 84th Test and Evaluation Squadron test pilot at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, has been fascinated by aviation and space. As a boy in 1981, Hines watched on television with millions of other Americans as NASA launched STS-1, the first orbital spaceflight of the space shuttle program.

“Ever since then, everything having to do with space has generated a sense of wonder in me,” Hines said. “However, as a kid, the idea of being an astronaut seemed so far-fetched that I didn’t even really consider it.”

In trying to be more realistic about his future, Hines decided he wanted to be a pilot. Little did he know that this career path would one day lead him to becoming an astronaut.

After high school, the Pennsylvania native decided, against the advice of his college counselors and in the face of a limited job market, to study aerospace engineering at Boston University.

“I loved all aspects of engineering,” he said. “I had learned about the test pilot career field and decided that would be the perfect way to combine my passions, so that became my pursuit.”

Upon graduating from college, Hines was accepted into the Air Force Officer Training School. He became a T-37 Tweet first assignment instructor pilot and started to work on a master’s degree in aerospace engineering. From there, Hines went on to fly the F-15E Strike Eagle before being accepted into Test Pilot School.

“At TPS, we had the opportunity to meet and talk to some of the astronauts who were coming through Edwards Air Force Base (California) for their space shuttle training missions,” he said. “That’s when the idea of becoming an astronaut started to seem like a real possibility because they had a similar background.”

Eager to take advantage of his opportunity, Hines first applied to NASA’s astronaut program in 2009, even before he completed TPS. He was not interviewed for the program. But that didn’t deter him. In 2013, he applied again, just after leaving the active-duty Air Force. But, once again, he was not interviewed.

Hines faced some steep competition. According to NASA’s website, thousands of people apply to the astronaut program, with a record high of about 8,000 applicants in 1978.

“I pretty much figured there was no chance as a civilian pilot,” he said.

After leaving active duty and joining the Air Force Reserve, Hines went to work for the Federal Aviation Administration for a short period of time before becoming a research pilot in the Aircraft Operations Division for NASA at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. As a research pilot, Hines flew several types of NASA aircraft and served as an instructor pilot for the astronaut corps.

“The space program was in a transition period that it hadn’t seen since the late 1970s,” he said. “The shuttle had just been retired, and there was a lull in activity.”

With the evolution of NASA’s space operations, the Aircraft Operations Division began enhancing its training program to prepare for the next phase of space flight focusing on space station operations and multi-vehicle operations with commercial partners.

“To be able to help reshape that small piece of astronaut training was really exciting to me, so I jumped at the chance,” Hines said. “The chance to be a part of the space program, even in a small way, was very exciting to me.”

While working for the AOD, Hines learned that several of the pilots who had been part of the division were selected to be in the astronaut program. This discovery gave him some renewed hope.

“So when the opportunity came around last year to submit an application, I put one in,” he said.

In total, more than 18,300 people submitted applications for the 2017 astronaut candidate class, which is an all-time record for NASA’s program. NASA ended up interviewing 120 of the applicants. From there, the organization selected 50 finalists, including Hines.

“The interview process itself consisted of lots of medical screening, psychological testing, face-to-face interviews, aptitude tests, group activities, individual tasks and an informal social,” he said. “About three weeks after the final week of interviews, the phone calls went out, and our fate was decided.”

On May 25, when NASA said it was going to notify by phone those who were selected for the astronaut program, Hines was at work flying when his co-workers gathered to share some news in person rather than by phone.

“Once I saw them on the flight line and they called me over, I had a pretty good idea, and one of the other pilots there pulled out his cellphone and started recording a video. Then I knew it was going to be good,” Hines said. “It was a really special moment having a lot of my friends and colleagues out there on the flight line for the job offer.”

Hines was one of only 12 applicants selected for the 2017 astronaut candidate class. In the midst of his excitement, he forgot to do one very important thing: accept the job offer.

“I just reacted. I was thrilled, but I never actually said yes,” he said. “So they had to confirm with me that I was saying yes and taking the job. It was so humbling and you’re going, ‘How can they pick me?’ You know there are so many people out there who didn’t get picked.”

Hines gives much of the credit for his success with both the Air Force Reserve and NASA to his wife, Kelli, and their three daughters. Kelli recalls being very anxious about waiting to hear whether or not her husband was selected for the new job.

“I went about the day’s business with our kids,” she said. “But it was definitely on my mind all day. I knew that waiting for this phone call was the hardest part of the whole interview process, which is about 16 months long. As soon as he found out that he had been selected he came home from work to tell me in person. I saw him pull up in front of our house and went out to meet him.”

Hines recalls that moment as well.

“She knew that was the day we were supposed to find out,

so when she saw me pull up in front of the house, she slowly walked outside,” he said. “When I got out of the truck, I gave her a thumbs-up, and she ran up to me, jumped in my arms and gave me a big hug. I think she was more nervous about it than I was.”

Kelli said she is proud that her husband is a great role model for their three young children.

“It was really inspiring to see their dad who has always given 100 percent to everything he does to achieve this goal,” she said. “Our 2-year-old thinks it’s pretty cool. She calls her dad a ‘NASAnut.’”

In pursuing his passion, Hines said his grandfather, who was a sixth-grade science teacher, helped fuel his interest in air and space as a young man.

“On vacation when I would go visit him, I would go with him to school,” he said. “So I was probably the only kid who ever went to school when I was on vacation.”

Growing up, Hines said he was fortunate that his family supported what he was so interested in at such an early age.

“As a kid, my parents and grandparents made countless sacrifices to give me the opportunities to pursue my passions,” he said. “Oftentimes, those sacrifices were in the form of miles driven to and from athletic events, money for camps or just time spent fanning the flames of my passion for all things aerospace. I’m quite sure my parents never envisioned me being in this position when they allowed me

to go to space camp in sixth grade. However, that experience, among others, motivated me to continue pursuing my dreams.”

The desire to learn has served Hines well in both his Reserve and NASA careers. In fact, Hines had the opportunity to serve as a project pilot for NASA’s first-ever autopilot installed in a T-38 Talon.

“Myself and one engineer were responsible for everything, including requirements development, source selection, design, flight testing and production planning, as well as writing the updates to the flight manual, inflight checklist, maintenance manuals and engineering drawings,” he said. “We only have 20 airplanes to manage, but to be able to influence the acquisition process so directly is very rewarding.”

As a pilot for both the Reserve and NASA, Hines is able to balance his responsibilities within both organizations in part because of his understanding of the two entities, while at the same time maintaining his flying requirements across the multiple aircraft platforms he flies.

“NASA is a blend of Air Force and Navy standards,” Hines said. “We’re able to, usually, take the best of each service’s practices and meld them into our operations. One of the biggest differences here at NASA, as a research pilot, is that we all fly three or four different aircraft. At one point, I was flying the T-38, C-9 Zero Gravity airplane, WB-57 and the Gulfstream G-3. That is almost unheard of in the Air Force.



On June 7, Hines joined the stage with 11 other classmates at the Johnson Space Center for the public announcement of those selected for the 2017 astronaut candidate class. Vice President Mike Pence participated in the event and gave some remarks to welcome the nation’s next astronaut candidates. (Photo courtesy of NASA)

In addition to that, I was flying the F-15E and F-15C on my Reserve weeks.”

After leaving active-duty due to family reasons, Hines said he really missed the opportunities the Air Force provided.

“It was the hardest decision I ever made because I was leaving while I was doing the best job I ever had,” he said. “I loved being a test pilot. However, my family had to come first.”

But as a Reservist, Hines is able to pursue both his NASA and Air Force careers, while at the same time enjoying a good family life.

“The ability to balance your civilian life along with continuing to serve and focusing on mission-essential requirements make the Air Force Reserve a great fit for me,” he said.

Hines’ 84th TES commander, Lt. Col. Michael “Hammer” Bess, said he has known his fellow pilot for several years and is fully aware of his capabilities.

“I flew with Lieutenant Colonel Hines during his initial F-15E training when my wife and I had the great pleasure to serve as his formal training unit instructors,” Bess said. “His selection may come as a surprise to many, but not us. He has always been an exceptional Airman, and the astronaut corps is lucky to have him.”

At the same time, Hines credits much of his success in being selected for the astronaut program to his experience in the Air Force.

“Without a doubt, I would not be here if it wasn’t for the opportunities given to me by the Air Force,” he said. “Along with my family, my Air Force experience is part of what shaped me as a leader. The importance of looking out for your people, even if it’s at your own expense, was really driven home by some superb leaders and mentors along the way. Plus, it’s where I learned what it means to be, not just a professional aviator, but a professional. Obviously, I have no way of knowing for sure, but I think many of the qualities that members of the (NASA) selection board were looking for were developed during my Air Force career.”

On June 7, Hines joined the stage with 11 other classmates at the Johnson Space Center for the public announcement of those selected. Vice President Mike Pence participated in the event and gave some remarks to welcome the nation’s next astronaut candidates.

“These are 12 men and women whose personal excellence and whose personal courage will carry our nation to even greater heights and discovery, and who I know will inspire our children and our grandchildren every bit as much as your forbearers have done so in this storied American program,” Pence said.

In August, Hines began his astronaut candidate training that will last the next two years. He said the training will cover many different areas including space station systems operations, space-walking, flight training, wilderness survival, medical and dental training, microbiology, and geology. He said he is also looking forward to getting to know his fellow candidates.

“I’m confident that our training will ensure we’re well-prepared for any curveballs that may be thrown at us,” he said. “It will be an incredibly exciting two years. And to have the opportunity to go through the training with such a great group of people is such an honor.”

With this newest group of 12, the total number of astronauts that NASA has selected since its first class in 1959 — the Mercury 7 — is 350.

For those with huge goals, Hines has some simple but important advice.

“Dream big, be selfless, work hard, take some risks,” he said.

And for those who want to join the next generation of astronauts, Hines has more practical words of wisdom.

“Do not build your life around being an astronaut because the numbers are so small,” he said. “Certainly, set the big goal and work toward the steps you need to achieve to be successful at that goal. However, find something you really enjoy doing, flying in my case, and pursue it to the best of your ability.

“Secondly, don’t be one-dimensional. Most of the astronauts I know weren’t necessarily at the top of their career field. However, they were well-rounded with other operational experiences that required skills that translate to space flight.”

For Hines, in addition to looking forward to the future of space exploration, it is also about remembering the past and those who came before him.

“It’s amazing to think about sharing in the same heritage as men like Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Ed White, Gordon Fullerton, Dave Scott, John Young and Story Musgrave,” he said. “To be able to stand on their accomplishments and help push humanity further into space is a greater honor than I ever could have imagined.”



Hines balances his career as a NASA pilot and now as an astronaut candidate with his service as an Air Force Reservist.

The 12 selected for the 2017 astronaut candidate class take a group photo while getting fitted for flight suits at Ellington Field near NASA’s Johnson Space Center. (Photo courtesy of NASA)



Master Sgt. Johann, 926th Wing, tracks a simulated enemy during a training mission July 7. As a sensor operator, Johann operates the multi-spectral targeting system of an MQ-9 for reconnaissance and providing terminal guidance for weapons. Johann was selected as one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. (Senior Airman Christian Clausen)

BEST OF THE BEST

Sensor operator named AF Outstanding Airman

By Maj. Jessica D'Ambrosio

(Editor's note: For security reasons related to the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission, the following story does not include the full name of the Air Force Reservist who was named one of the Air Force's 2017 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.)

Thanks to an Air Force recruiter with a penchant for McDonald's, Master Sgt. Johann of the 926th Wing at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, was inspired to enlist while working the fast-foot restaurant's drive-thru, because he thought it would be cool to wear the uniform.

Johann joined the Air Force in 2005 right out of high school. Fast-forward 12 years, and the sergeant was recently named one of the service's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

"I joined the military because of 9/11," Johann said. "I wanted to have a purpose in my life."

When he came into the Air Force, Johann worked in Services, deploying multiple times supporting lodging, recreation and mortuary affairs. After his first term he was burnt out on Services and considered separating.

"Luckily my supervisor at the time, Master Sgt. Sacko Raffensperger, encouraged me to explore other career fields and pushed me to get my retraining package together."

Johann liked the idea of being an airborne linguist since he spoke three languages, but that career field wasn't available to him at that time. He then looked into the 1U unmanned aerospace systems career field, which needed a lot of staff sergeants.

"I guess everything happens for a reason," he said.

In 2014, Johann transitioned from active duty to the Air Force Reserve and joined the 926th WG, which is fully integrated into the active-duty's remotely piloted aircraft mission. Reserve Citizen Airmen work side by side with their active-duty counterparts every day to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations.

"It speaks volumes to his character and commitment to the total force to be selected as one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year," said Chief Master Sgt. James Loper, 926th WG command chief. "His accomplishment highlights how vital this mission set is and the daily impact it makes on the joint force."

Johann's first duty with the 926th WG was as a section chief for a total force integration team that operated the MQ-9 camera in support of combatant commanders and ground forces. He now serves as an MQ-9 instructor and evaluator sensor operator.

But his work doesn't stop when he's off duty. In his limited free time, Johann is finishing his bachelor's degree and plans to start working on a master's degree in business administration when that's done. His aspirations also include getting his private pilot license and then an instrument rating and a commercial pilot license.

Johann's squadron superintendent attributes his selection for OAY to his going above and beyond.

"Master Sergeant Johann separated himself by continuously challenging his flight to be the standard that others try to achieve," Chief Master Sgt. Nathan said. "He persistently worked to improve himself and those around him in all four pillars of the Air Force.

"What this award does not show is all the Airmen who are now setting new goals because of his leadership," Nathan said.

Johann spends many long, hard hours accomplishing the mission and his ambitions, but he never loses sight of the fact that his success is attributable to the entire Air Force.

"I would not have been nominated as an OAY without my team and leadership," Johann said. "My active-duty and Reserve squadrons have the most outstanding pilots, sensor operators and intelligence personnel who tirelessly fly and support 24/7 combat operations lines with minimal manning. These professionals uphold the highest aircrew standards by prosecuting targets and eliminating enemy combatants to keep our country safe."

(D'Ambrosio is assigned to the 926th WG public affairs office at Nellis AFB.)



Global Vigilance

Individual Reservists support ISR mission

By Master Sgt. Beth Anschutz

(Editor's note: Some information for this article was taken from the Air Force Waypoints. For more information about the National Reconnaissance Office, visit <http://nro.gov>. For up-to-date information, visit the NRO social media pages: Facebook, www.facebook.com/NationalReconnaissanceOffice; Twitter, @NatReconOfc; and YouTube, www.youtube.com/nationalreconnaissanceoffice.)



High above the clouds, intelligence satellites operated by the National Reconnaissance Office keep a close watch on the world below.

Air Force Reserve individual mobilization augmentees play a key role in ensuring these satellites remain a viable component of global vigilance for the nation.

The NRO is the government agency tasked with oversight of the United States' intelligence satellites and is a crucial piece of the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission, which is one of the Air Force's five enduring core missions.

More than 100 IMAs are assigned to the NRO. Many of them also work within the intelligence, space or cyber communities in a civilian capacity. This cross-pollination of experience ensures a unique blend of skills and experience is available and that the country's intelligence satellites are performing at their best.

"Our Reservists work on operations floors, in labs and in offices," said Lt. Col. Sheila Wilds, director of the Reserve Management Office at the NRO. "They are a highly experienced and diverse workforce with unique skill sets derived from their connections with the civilian sector."

Finding the right match of skills and experience is Wilds' priority. She works to familiarize the leaders at the NRO with the best way to align the right Air Force specialty code, rank and skill level with the right position.

"It is important to help leaders understand how to utilize IMAs properly and what kind of support they can provide," Wilds said.

In addition to supporting ISR functions, Reservists at the NRO also support the cyberspace mission. Cybersecurity is a critical enabler of the warfighting mission.

Senior Master Sgt. Nick Multari works at the NRO in support of the special communications office as an information system security manager. He is employed at the NRO in and out of uniform and helps the organization deliver cutting-edge ISR capabilities, providing an asymmetric advantage in the field. He works with system engineers and program managers to build security into their communications platforms. His subject-matter expertise in security architecture and engineering plays a key role in meeting cybersecurity objectives.

"Knowing that what I do enables our systems to deliver capabilities in a manner that is secure and readily available to those whose lives depend on that capability motivates me and is personally rewarding," Multari said.

He said his service in both civilian and military capacities gives him a multi-dimensional outlook on the mission and a unique perspective on cyberspace operations.

The depth and breadth of knowledge the IMAs provide to the NRO is a calling card of the Reserve Citizen Airman contribution to the force.

Tech. Sgt. Sharon Hazel, who is currently assigned to the Intelligence Support Division in the National Reconnaissance Operations Center, said the IMA program affords her maximum flexibility and management of her career. She has more than 16 years of experience in the intelligence community and said

her team at the NRO capitalizes on the strengths of each other's diverse skill sets.

"We rely on the talents of our highly diversified team to help the NRO solve the toughest challenges," she said.

Hazel said as an IMA, she can use her civilian experiences to improve her capabilities and skills in uniform. The ISR capabilities Hazel and the other IMAs support are the bedrock of Air Force support for successful joint, interagency and coalition partner operations around the globe.

In her civilian career, Hazel has been a senior intelligence adviser, providing executive management consulting to national-level collaboration, resource planning, geospatial intelligence mission management strategies and integration efforts between the intelligence community, the Department of Defense and other GEOINT communities. She has also established insider-threat programs for industry.

"One of the greatest values our team brings to the NRO is our diverse skill sets," Hazel said.

This diversity of skill sets helps the IMAs seamlessly integrate with their active-duty partners and the leaders they support. On any given day, nearly 5,000 Air Force Reservists are serving on active duty worldwide in support of combatant commanders and other agencies and major commands. Within the NRO, IMAs create an agile environment in the face of day-to-day operations and contingency mission execution.

Contributing to mission sustainability during high operations tempo is a cornerstone of the Reserve mission. Maj. Jason Mellein is an IMA assigned as a mission director at an NRO mission ground station. He said his team provides surge support that can be employed both as a steady-state augmentation and as a targeted fix when there are challenges. Additionally, Mellein can serve as a backfill for active-duty members who are deployed or deploy himself to support the team and the mission.

Mellein said the mission ground station is like a small city dedicated to mission operations, supported by different teams and administrative staff members who are critical to mission success and protection. As a mission director, Mellein acts as the MGS commander's administrative and operational representative in leading the teams that fly the satellites producing intelligence data. His Air Force skill set is not only technical but executive, giving him a diverse toolkit to support the mission and the people who execute the mission.

"It's energizing and humbling to know that on a daily basis the team has real and positive impacts on the missions of people across a broad swath of the national security enterprise," Mellein said.

The Air Force Reserve contribution to the fight is undeniable.

"The IMAs at the NRO not only augment active-duty forces when they deploy or mobilize, they also provide strategic depth to the intelligence community," Wilds said. "They are a ready force that is called on to provide surge support during crisis operations, exercises and special projects."

(Anschutz is assigned to the Air Reserve Personnel Center public affairs office at Buckley Air Force Base, Colorado.)

More than 100 individual mobilization augmentees, like (left to right) Maj. Jason Mellen, Tech. Sgt. Sharon Hazel and Senior Master Sgt. Nick Multari, help ensure global vigilance for the United States at the National Reconnaissance Office.

LAUNCHING INTO CYBERSPACE

Units utilizing mobile apps to improve communication

By Tyler Grimes

As mobile applications become more popular and a major part of people's everyday lives, Air Force Reserve units throughout the nation are developing apps to expand capabilities and give more flexibility and agility to Reserve Citizen Airmen to be ready to complete the mission.

At the 916th Air Refueling Wing located at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, the public affairs office helped launch the wing's mobile app in February. Some of the app's major features allow Reservists to view upcoming events and unit training assembly dates, base maps, a fitness calculator, Air Force references and handbooks, wing news, and social media updates.

Senior Airman Jeramy Moore, a PA photojournalist, explained how the mobile app was first developed.

"A few forward-thinking Airmen in the wing, including Maj. Christine Harvey, Lt. Col Shannon Mann and retired Master Sgt. Wendy Lopedote, bounced the idea around for years until it fell on the ears of a sympathetic commander," Moore said.

With leadership's support, the team started looking at possible developers for the app. One of the developers the team contacted was Straxis LLC.

"Straxis typically works with major universities, so the features and designs in the proposed app were configured for university students," Moore said. "We had to edit almost every item so that it would be appropriate for an Air Force audience."

The company worked with the 916th ARW on achievable timelines and milestones for both the app's soft launch and official launch. The app costs \$2,500 per year, which includes ongoing technical support.

Since the official launch, Moore said the feedback from the wing's Reservists has been very positive.

As someone who has gone through the process of developing a mobile app, Moore has some advice for other Reservists interested in taking on the task.

"Prepare as an office and wing for the launch of the app," he said. "Provide continuous support and feedback as long as the app is active. Market it generously."

The wing is working on incorporating new features like a uniform guide and feedback device.

The 315th Airlift Wing at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, was one of the first Air Force Reserve Command units to launch an app, and Michael Dukes, 315th AW public affairs

command information chief, recalls the steps it took to get the app done back in 2015.

"Since everyone has a smartphone these days, we knew that an app was the logical direction to better reach our members," Dukes said. "Also, most people turn to their phones for information first, and some prefer that method over desktop computers."

When Dukes and his team brought the idea of an app to their leadership, they received full support to move forward.

In starting the process of developing the app, Dukes was met with a major challenge.

"Initially, I tried developing it myself, and while I have technical skills, I quickly learned that there were elements involved that would not make it a very efficient way of accomplishing our goal of a wing app," he said. "We eventually found a local developer that could do all the programming to our specifications."

One of the things about creating an app that he quickly found out was satisfying the various requirements for the different application platforms.

"Apple requires that it review and approve all software and apps designed for its products," Dukes said. "The last time I checked, that fee was \$1,000 just to have Apple look at and give it the green light."

The 315th managed to find a developer who helped develop the app and agreed to provide service and support for two years at a cost of \$2,500.

The app they created has a number of features including calendars for upcoming events, weather forecasts, buttons for a crisis hotline, job resources, the Yellow Ribbon program and family readiness, and a news feed. In addition, the app gives people the opportunity to submit photos to the public affairs office for consideration for the wing's social media channels.

"Initially, people were concerned about the app permissions such as access contacts, email, phones and social media, but we explained that those are standard and required rights," Dukes said. "And the app only uses those parts of your phone when you decide to share a photo or comment on our Facebook page, or send an email to us through the app. This part is about educating unit members."

Dukes explained that once the users understood more about the app, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. And

even though the app launched two years ago, the public affairs office is working on doing more with it.

"I'm planning to create a promotional video commercial within the next month or so," he said. "We are also looking at developing a PA program to produce podcasts for our wing, and there will be a button for that, too."

The 433rd AW located at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, also has an app for its Reservists with features such as event calendars and a fitness calculator, but it also has a very unique feature called "Groups."

"This is the newest feature added to the app," Senior Master Sgt. Joe Gonzalez, 26th Aerial Port Squadron passenger services flight chief, said. "Groups allows for a unit or organization like the Rising 6 to create its own space within the app."

The new feature allows the app administrators to send information and content to specific target audiences with their own calendar, message board and photos.

In developing the app, Maj. Timothy Wade, 433rd AW public affairs chief, enlisted the support of Gonzalez to help lead the effort.

"Our leadership wanted an avenue to engage with the lifeblood of the wing — the younger Airmen," Wade said. "So leadership set up a committee, and Sergeant Gonzalez took the mantle and did the investigative work on establishing the app. With his effort and our PA staff's actions, we have been able to establish another way to communicate with our Airmen."

Wade said the mobile app provides a new way for the wing to stay connected with its people.

"With so many of our Airmen living in various areas of the country, it is imperative we have an avenue to contact them when we have inclement weather, national emergencies or exercises," he said.

At the 94th AW at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, Col. Patrick Campbell, 94th Operations Group commander, saw a need for establishing a better communication method to relay information to Reservists assigned to the wing.

"The 94th AW had a serious communications issue," Campbell said. "The primary method of distributing information was what we call 'Base Pop' or an email blitz to the members' government email address. However, most members don't check their government email on a regular basis. Additionally, numerous emails have large files attached, which completely overwhelms the standard email box. Subsequently, many members would just delete 'Base Population' titled emails."

As with other units, the 94th AW's solution to this communication problem was to develop a mobile app and, like the 433rd AW and 916th ARW, the 94th contacted the company Straxis for assistance. Campbell had previously worked with the company as a member of the 914th AW (now the 914th ARW) at Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, New York, to develop an app for that unit.

"It is the company that developed the app for the Air Force

Academy as well as the other military academies," he said. "We were able to modify its college template to meet our unique base needs. Since our start, there are over a dozen military units that have created apps with Straxis, to include the United States Air Force Band."

When the app was completed, it was time to launch.

"We then gave a select few individuals access to the beta version for about a month," he said. "After we worked through the kinks, we released it during the January 2017 UTA."

Campbell said one of the keys to maintaining a successful app is keeping the information up to date and pertinent.

"Throwing stuff on the app 'just because' makes the app too busy and clumsy to use," he said. "Sending out numerous push notifications renders those notifications to just noise on one's phone. Information on the app must be relevant and current. Having old data on the app for long periods of time indicates no one really cares about it, and members will stop using it."

Campbell said the Air Force, as a whole, needs to fully embrace mobile apps as an effective form of communication.

"It is important to note that many of our new Airmen do not have computers," he said. "But all of them have cellphones. I strongly believe if we communicate effectively to this new generation, we will keep them. Recruitment and retention is a problem today. These tools will speak directly to our young Airmen, and they will know that we actually care about them."

(For more information on how to develop a mobile app within AFRC, visit <https://parr.afrc.af.mil>.)



THE WORLD OF CYBER WARRIORS

**Recruiters working to meet growing demand
By Master Sgt. Chance Babin**

(Editor's note: The following story is in recognition of National Cyber Security Awareness Month, which is observed each October.)

Cyberspace operations is a career field that continues to grow and is vital to the United States' national defense. As the field grows at breakneck speed, the job of finding qualified individuals to fill the needs of the Air Force Reserve falls on Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service.

The 960th Cyberspace Operations Group, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, is the only cyberspace operations organization within AFRC. It comprises 15 direct-reporting units with approximately 1,250 people who are spread out across 11 geographically separated locations. Twelve of the 15 are either classic associate or Reserve associate units, meaning they are partnered with active-duty organizations.

The missions of these units encompass total cyber operations: combat communications; command & control of defensive cyber operations and DCO-response actions; continental United State-wide communication infrastructure management; cyber defense analysis; DCO, DCO-RA network operations; and initial qualifications training for cyber ops.

As the need for cyber warriors grows, recruiting must meet requirements by bringing in quality individuals. So last year, a dedicated cyber recruiter position was created and embedded within the 960th CYOG. Tech Sgt. Dyanie Baker became AFRC Recruiting Service's first cyber recruiter. Although

Baker is dedicated to cyber, any recruiter can recruit cyber troops.

"It was absolutely an honor to be chosen," Baker said. "As with any new program, there will be growing pains. Everything so far has been trial and error. But after a year in the position, I think I have found a sweet spot."

"The biggest hurdle for me is that since I am the only one, I don't have anyone to bounce ideas around with. I have to kind of figure things out on my own. I think with the growing demand of cyber units and the need to fill positions, there will be more recruiting done in the cyber fields. I hope that my position will expand and maybe have a team of cyber recruiters. I think success comes in numbers."

While her new job poses some big challenges, Baker said she relishes the opportunity and realizes how important it is for this growing mission.

"It has given me a greater understanding of what specialized recruiting is, and I thoroughly enjoy the cyber realm," Baker said. "There is a growing demand for new talent in the cyber domain."

Currently, the 960th is 80 percent manned, and the group will be adding new units in the future.

"It is much more difficult to find individuals who are qualified for cyber positions than many of the others, so it is beneficial to have a recruiter who understands the mission needs and requirements," Baker said. "It also takes more time to get applicants hired into these units. Without a dedicated recruiter, these jobs tend to not get filled as frequently as they need to."

For the 960th CYOG, having a dedicated recruiter with an understanding of the mission and the organization's needs takes some burden off the already thin staff.

"Being embedded with the 960th CYOG headquarters has really given me an opportunity to gain an understanding of the group's needs when it comes to manning," Baker said. "It functions differently than many other units. I am able to communicate with the units very easily, and they come to me frequently with specific needs. This allows me to take some of the work off of the full-time staff's plate. With this being a new position, I would consider us to have a great relationship, and it will only get better with time."

Since Baker has been on the job, leadership within the 960th CYOG has taken note of the increased production.

"I have been in command for a year," said Col. Anthony Perkins, 960th CYOG commander. "And through partnerships with RS, our manning has increased 18 percent by 203 accessions. Three of four units added October 1, 2016, have met initial operational capability, and two are scheduled to reach full operational capability 12 to 18 months ahead of schedule."

With additional growth of the cyber mission expected in the next few years, the importance of the relationship will remain high.

“We have plenty of openings for industrious, self-starter type Airmen; however, the team already in place is working extremely hard to hire, retain and market toward the future,” Perkins said. “The 960th CYOG is projected to grow into a cyber wing in fiscal year 2018. Projections show the 960th CYOG adding a unit per year from FY19 to FY22. And in some years, two units will be added.”

With the current need for cyber warriors and more on the horizon, Baker and the rest of the command’s recruiters will be working hard to keep up with this growing mission. To meet the demands of a very broad and diverse career field, cyber warrior recruiters are casting a wide net looking for good fits in the various units.

“The units are looking for qualified individuals with motivation and drive to succeed. Experience is nice but not necessary,” Baker said. “There isn’t a black-and-white checklist on what they have to possess, because each unit’s needs are different. We have a good balance between prior service and non-prior service. The units have to ensure they have enough fully qualified individuals to train the new Airmen.”

Bringing in prior-service recruits — roughly 61 percent of accessions over the past five years — has many advantages for the Reserve. The cost savings on training is a huge benefit to the units.

“Finding individuals who already have experience is icing on the cake,” Baker said. “They bring another side of the job that others may not have experienced yet. The technical schools are extremely difficult, and when the members already have the civilian experience or certifications and experience, there is less chances of them being unsuccessful through technical school.”

For the 960th CYOG, finding individuals with cyber, electronics, engineering, intelligence, avionics, aircraft maintenance and space experience are all helpful. The group has a high percentage of intelligence Air Force specialty code officers and enlisted members within each organization.

“Overall, if members have ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) or AFOQT (Air Force Officer Qualifying Test) scores that make them eligible for cyberspace service, we’re willing to work them into our rotation ASAP,” Perkins said. “Prior service is also a good thing. Cyberspace is the newest battlespace/domain. Cyberspace supports all other domains: land, maritime, air, space and ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance), so those with prior military experience and experience from other services is a big plus for accession.”

Perkins said current members of the Reserve who are cyber professionals in their civilian jobs but are aligned against other AFSCs are in high demand as well, particularly those who possess various certifications.

Interviews for the majority of military positions are required. Most interviews can only be accomplished over unit training assembly weekends, when the units are staffed better



Cyber warriors work hard to protect and defend America's cyberspace domain daily.

to actually complete a thorough interview, the colonel said.

“My unit commanders, superintendents and I are looking for energetic people who are willing to learn, who are looking to contribute to the development of tactics, techniques and procedures in a fast-paced, quickly evolving battlespace,” Perkins said. “If they qualify, we have a need for those with that propensity.”

The colonel admits that requiring interviews does slow down the recruiting process and can cause some friction. He said unit commanders and superintendents are assessing risk by AFSC to help provide the Recruiting Service a list of slots that may be filled without conducting interviews.

“In most areas, the Recruiting Service and 960th CYOG units are working well together,” Perkins said. “My relationship with Col. Hal Linnean (RS commander) down to the embedded recruiter at my headquarters is good to great and improving daily with each new recruit.”

Currently the 960th CYOG is 80 percent manned across the board. Some cyber AFSCs for the active component are manned well below that number, the colonel said. With projections showing the 960th growing exponentially for the next five years, the demand for cyber warriors will remain high.

“The demand signal for technicians and managers is high; but the demand for cyber leaders is off the charts,” Perkins said. “What happens in active duty echoes in the reserve component in cyber. Our primary source of new talent is the active duty. If its manning is low, Reserve manning in key

areas will be lower, depending on the pipeline.”

With the demand for cyber warriors being so high and competition with other branches of the service and the civilian sector, Baker has her work cut out for her.

“Because I don’t have a ‘zone,’ my entire job is actual recruiting,” she said. “I have to seek out qualified applicants who fit the need of my units. I spend a lot of time in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) schools, high schools, colleges and CyberPatriot programs. (Cyberpatriot is the national cyber education youth program created to help direct students toward careers in cybersecurity and STEM disciplines.) They are doing phenomenal things nationwide, and I truly enjoy working with them as much as possible.”

Perkins issued a challenge to anyone wanting to be part of the growing cyber warrior domain.

“Today, Americans from across the country can revolutionize a domain that exponentially grows somehow, somehow on a daily basis and an environment where everyone from the newest recruit to the most senior leader coordinates to solve difficult problems,” he said. “If you like every day to be an exciting challenge, providing an opportunity to positively affect the defense of this nation across all five domains — land, maritime, air, space & ISR — come join us. See if you measure up and help us define, develop and defend cyberspace!”

(Babin is noncommissioned officer in charge of public affairs for the Recruiting Service at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)



The 655th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, is an independent group under 10th Air Force that ensures the training and readiness of Air Force Reserve Command intelligence squadrons engaged in diverse and complex intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission sets.

RECRUITING NEW RECRUITERS

Schoolhouse trains Reservists who take the challenge

Story and Photos by Master Sgt. Chance Babin

It has been said that the lifeblood of an organization is its people. This saying rings true for the Air Force Reserve Command and its nearly 70,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen.

The task of bringing new Airmen into the AFRC family is the responsibility of the men and women of the Air Force Reserve Command Recruiting Service, a team that has met or exceeded its goal for 17 consecutive years. But before recruiters can execute their job and bring in new Reserve Citizen Airmen required for AFRC to carry on its mission, they have to undergo intense training, which falls into the hands of a special group of total force recruiters.

The Air Force Recruiting Schoolhouse is located at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. The school instructors teach three separate curriculums for active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard members, all under the same roof.

The Reserve portion of the school receives between 40 and

50 students a year to complete the vigorous six-week training course. According to Senior Master Sgt. James Scapperotti, lead instructor for AFRC, the instructors are always looking for more Reservists to take the challenge and become recruiters.

“We want to encourage Reservists to consider applying for recruiting duty,” Scapperotti said. “We need them to help us man our Reserve units, and it’s a huge opportunity. Reservists should understand that recruiting is not only a potential career opportunity, but what we teach here can have lasting impressions in whatever they are pursuing. We aren’t just teaching recruiting. We also teach salesmanship, communication and a little bit of PME (professional military education) with a technical side. So a lot of the things that we equip our students with here are translatable to other avenues if they so desire.”

Scapperotti wants interested Reservists to know that this isn’t their fathers’ recruiting school. The course has been

totally revamped and is unique in that it is 100-percent performance based. There is no written test. Everything is based on attitude and ability.

“When you come to recruiting school, you need to absolutely have an open mind,” Scapperotti said. “The course has been redesigned essentially from the ground up. A lot of the things people may have heard about recruiting school don’t necessarily exist in this curriculum anymore.”

One of the reasons the course was redesigned was to better prepare students to hit the ground running. One of the objectives was to get as much information from the job qualifications and skills list into the coursework to expedite the timeline between graduating and being certified to be a recruiter.

“We were able to get about 72 percent of the JQS documented and accomplished while here at recruiting school, and that was a big push saying we need to get closer to what we coined down here as mission-ready recruiting,” Scapperotti said.

The sergeant said the school is able to produce recruiters who are essentially self-sufficient and ready to go do the job when they get into the office.

While Scapperotti is the senior AFRC instructor, Master Sgt. Geovanny Govea is his counterpart, who came to the school with a lot of enthusiasm and hasn’t looked back.

“They say he’s the college professor, and I’m the college coach,” Govea said. “That’s the best analogy. He’s very formal and poised, and I can get kind of wild and impulsive, still within regulations. I think we work well together. I’m very high energy and optimistic, and he is just as optimistic as I am. He allows a lot of the fun to happen but still gets the training done and doesn’t lose sight of the fact that this is business.”

Part of Govea’s enthusiasm is geared toward his love of the Air Force Reserve. He thinks that once students have that belief in their organization, the sky is the limit.

“I don’t think a lot of them initially really understand what selling is,” he said. “I think once they understand if they believe in their organization, experience success and improve in life, then the lightbulb clicks and you can essentially sell the Air Force Reserve to anybody. Ultimately, we change people’s lives.”

Students choose to become recruiters for various reasons, but they all realize it is a challenging career.

“I have a passion to help people and got a chance to work with a development and training flight to see what recruiting was doing,” said Staff Sgt. Brandon Pendleton, a student at the recruiting school who is assigned to the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Base, Ohio. “It was that transition from seeing the recruiters and being able to work with the recruiters. I really liked what they were doing.”

Staff Sgt. Christine Johnson is in the process of transitioning from a military training instructor with the

323rd Training Squadron at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph to a recruiter.

“I wanted to be either an MTI or a recruiter, so I decided to do MTI first,” Johnson said. “I’m a people person. I was a young person who didn’t have a lot of direction, so if I could afford someone that same opportunity the military gave me, that would be awesome. Being an MTI, I get to transform them. But I think it will be neat to be on the other side of the coin now where I’m getting them to join before going to basic training — giving them the shot from the beginning.”

Staff Sgt. Chasity Hercher, a former Marine and currently a fitness specialist with the 482nd Fighter Wing at Homestead ARB, Florida, sees the Reserve as a great opportunity for females.

“I’ve received a lot of good training in the Air Force Reserve,” Hercher said. “But, more importantly, I feel like I belong to a family, and that is important to me. There is strength in diversity, and that is one of the great things about being in the Air Force Reserve. The Reserve was very accepting and treated me equally. When I originally joined the Reserve, I wasn’t treated like I couldn’t do the job because I was a female. I got the exact same training and was treated with respect. It gave me that confidence that I needed.”

“The Air Force Reserve made such a difference in my life that I felt it would be a good opportunity for me to help other people. And having worked on orders as a Reservist, I got a chance to see what it was like to be an Airman every day. So becoming a recruiter gives me an opportunity to have career progression and to be an Airman every day.”

One of the major differences with the Reserve program versus active duty or the Guard is a guaranteed first assignment. The first duty location for Reserve recruiters is tied to academics and class rankings.

“It makes for better students,” Scapperotti said. “While they are here, our students are extremely focused and driven to succeed, because there is a competitiveness.”

“It’s different for members of the active duty and Guard. They basically come here with assignments in hand knowing exactly where they are going. We are asking our Reservists to step up and get out of their comfort zone, come down here and get trained, remain focused and driven the entire time they are here to potentially get that opportunity.”

For the students, knowing their classroom performance is directly related to their future assignment keeps them focused on the tasks at hand.

“The camaraderie is good with our class,” Pendleton said. “The only stressor is we don’t know where we are going yet, and we have to be ranked. So that is always in the back of our minds. But we still want to help each other out and learn. It would not be as competitive if we all knew where we were going, but that competitive nature drives us to study a little bit harder and at the same time help each other out. So it’s a nice balance.”



Senior Master Sgt. James Scapperotti (front left), senior instructor at the Air Force Reserve Recruiting School, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, and instructor Master Sgt. Geovanny Govea (front right) lead class members in the recruiting chant, “Boy am I enthusiastic,” at the beginning of another day.

While the school's total-force setup — with different curriculums — is a well-functioning machine, there are times when it can be a juggling act.

"Some of the challenges are the unique environment that we work in," Scapperotti said. "We work in a real total-force environment right alongside active duty and the Guard. In many ways, we work really well together. But being that we work at an active-duty squadron, there are times when we are pulled into the mix of things that are just related to active duty. But Sergeant Govea and I have to set the right example and right tone, even if something does not apply to us."

While it is a challenge to juggle some of the Reserve classroom duties with active-duty squadron activities, Scapperotti is a valuable asset to both.

"A lot of the NCOs gravitate toward Senior Master Sergeant Scapperotti and seek him out as a mentor," said Chief Master Sgt. Frank Staud, superintendent of the recruiting school. "He just does a phenomenal job, and it's helped him grow as



Scapperotti is dressed in civilian clothes as he plays the role of a potential recruit while being interviewed by Staff Sgt. Brandon Pendleton, a student at the recruiting school who is assigned to the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Base, Ohio. The sales lab is used to evaluate students' ability to conduct interviews, complete forms correctly and address applicants' concerns.



A trio of students listen to last-minute instructions and prepare themselves for an upcoming sales lab interview. (Master Sgt. Chance Babin)

well. He has a vast knowledge of the active-duty side, which is unusual for someone who hasn't been on active duty, so that's pretty cool. He has such a vast knowledge of all three components that he is very valuable in taking an unofficial role as a leader."

The honor of mentoring others is not lost on Scapperotti.

"I've been really honored while I've been here," he said.

"Several active-duty personnel have asked me to tack on their stripes for their promotions, and my two Air National Guard colleagues have asked me to do the same thing. So when that happens in a total-force flight, you know whatever you are doing is right."

Staud really likes what the Reserve instructors bring to the squadron and knows they are always ready to pitch in a hand if needed.

"Phenomenal is the word I would use to describe them," he said. "They are very professional and go after everything and anything they can. They seek out challenges. I guess that's the best thing they do. There is no downtime with them. They are always going to find something to occupy their time and better themselves or the team as a whole."

One of the things that makes it possible for the two Reserve instructors as well as their Guard counterparts to mentor others is experience in the field.

"I came here with 10 years of experience, so we are a bit senior to them in our experience level (most active-duty instructors have about five year of experience)," Scapperotti said. "So at first they see us as instructors or peers. But then they realize that, no, we are mentors, and they can learn a lot from us."

"I do involve myself with all three components, probably because the mission of the recruiting school has just become so important to me. I can easily say I have become emotionally connected with the mission at recruiting school. That has translated to me being involved with all three components in some way or another."

While the Recruiting Service is always looking for more recruiters, and the need and demand for good recruiters will only increase as end-strength numbers are going up for the next fiscal year, Govea wants potential recruiting school attendees to know hard work equals rewards.

"To be successful, this is one of the industries where you get what you put in, which is really rewarding, but you really have to work for it, and it can be difficult if you don't want it," he said. "The school will keep you on your toes. It will keep you young, or it can put some gray hairs on you if you let it."

"We try to teach balance. Physical fitness is important, and family is huge. If your home isn't good, what makes you think you can come to work with a smile. You have to take care of things at home and continue professional development. It's all about growing overall and reaching your highest potential by believing in your organization and yourself."

(Babin is noncommissioned officer in charge of public affairs for the Recruiting Service at Robins AFB, Georgia.)



Govea prepares his class for an upcoming sales lab evaluation.



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Tech. Sgt. Gregory St. Martin, 434th Security Forces Squadron, Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, looks down the scope of his M4 carbine rifle equipped with a Multiple Integrated Laser System as he participates in a tactical engagement simulation drill during exercise Patriot Warrior at Young Air Assault Strip, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, Aug. 18. More than 600 Reserve Citizen Airmen and 10,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and international partners converged on the state of Wisconsin to support a range of interlinked exercises including Patriot Warrior, Global Medic, CSTX, Diamond Saber, and Mortuary Affairs Exercise (MAX). Patriot Warrior is Air Force Reserve Command's premier exercise, providing an opportunity for Reserve Citizen Airmen to train with joint and international partners in airlift, aeromedical evacuation and mobility support. This exercise is intended to test the ability of the Air Force Reserve to provide combat-ready forces to operate in dynamic, contested environments and to sharpen Citizen Airmen's skills in supporting combatant commander requirements. (Tech. Sgt. Efren Lopez)